

**Hampshire Health and Adult Social Care Committee
Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust update
June 2021**

Trust response to COVID-19

1. Introduction

This paper provides a brief update on our continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic and recovering our services following the most recent wave of coronavirus.

As of 11 June 2021, local prevalence of COVID-19 has stabilised, though cases may be expected to rise as restrictions are eased across the country. Although the national vaccination programme is progressing at pace, we remain vigilant – especially to the threat of new variants.

Our associated infection prevention and control measures remain in place, including the wearing of PPE such as masks, appropriate social distancing and regular testing for both staff and patients. Updated guidance for visitors balances the need to provide compassionate care carefully with the measures required to keep patients and colleagues safe.

2. Vaccination and vaccine research

On 7 May, we vaccinated our last individual at the Oasis Centre at PHU, which had been transformed into our vaccination hub since December 2020 and enabled us to vaccinate thousands of staff and local people.

Portsmouth Research Hub, part of Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust is one of the sites running the Cov-Boost trial to see which of the existing vaccines could be used in a future vaccination booster programme. The study, being led by University Hospitals Southampton, will give experts behind the UK's COVID-19 vaccination programme a better idea of how effective a third booster of each vaccine is, in protecting an individual from the virus. Recruiting for this trial is currently active and we are encouraging residents in Portsmouth who have already received both doses of the vaccine to take part.

3. Recovering elective services

We are seeking to manage increases in planned activity in order to recover our services and return to normal non-elective activity, as well as planning for potential further impact of COVID-19, while embedding transformation to sustain improvements for the long term.

National planning guidance has been published with a focus on the first six months of 2021/22. This guidance is largely focused on supporting the recovery of services affected during the last wave, and is broken down into the following areas of priority:

- Supporting the health and wellbeing of staff and taking action on recruitment and retention
- Delivering the NHS vaccination programme and continuing to meet the needs of patients with COVID-19

- Building on what we have learned during the pandemic to transform the delivery of services, accelerate the restoration of elective and cancer care and manage the increasing demand on mental health services
- Expanding primary care capacity to improve access, local health outcomes and address health inequalities
- Transforming community and urgent and emergency care to prevent inappropriate attendance at emergency departments (ED), improve timely admission to hospital for ED patients and reduce length of stay
- Working collaboratively across systems to deliver on these priorities.

An elective recovery fund has been established as part of the national planning guidance to support services recovery by attaining set national thresholds compared to 2019/20 levels. We are currently planning to exceed the described thresholds

It will take a considerable amount of time to fully recover to pre-pandemic waiting times for patients, however we are assessing patients' clinical needs to ensure those requiring the most urgent care, including cancer services, receive it as quickly and safely as possible. We continue encouraging people to contact their GP practice with any concerns around their health.

We continued providing urgent and cancer treatments throughout the pandemic as we understand the impact delay could have had on patient care and outcomes. The volume of elective activity in April and May was strong against national targets to access the Elective Recovery Fund.

We continue to work closely with our partners across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the elective recovery fund, £160 million of NHS funding was announced earlier in May to support 'elective accelerator' sites. A share of that funding has been secured for Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS to support the implementation and evaluation of innovative ways to address elective recovery for the benefit of our patients and population.

We have seen an increase in patients attending the Emergency Department at QA over the last six weeks and continue encouraging and educating patients to make the right decision in terms of where they attend to receive treatment or support, in order to aid social distancing in the ED.

This includes the NHS 111 service where patients are advised to contact 111 either by phone or online before attending ED, unless it is a life-threatening emergency, so they can be directed to the right service at the right time. NHS 111 is also able to book patients in for a time slot at the ED or direct them to mental health services, urgent treatment centre, minor injuries unit, GP practice, pharmacy or self-care.